

INTRODUCTORY ADDRESS

—OF—

HON. WILLIAM P. WHEELER,

OF KEENE, N. H.

PRESIDENT OF THE DAY.

AND

ORATION

OF

BARON STOW, D. D.

OF BOSTON,

DELIVERED AT THE

CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION,

AT CROYDON, N. H.

JUNE 13, 1866.

—OF—

Claremont, N. H.:

PRINTED BY THE CLAREMONT MANUFACTURING COMPANY.

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ADDRESS OF
HON. WILLIAM P. WHEELER OF KEENE.

Ladies and Gentlemen :

IT was a happy thought on the part of that portion of the household abiding here at home, to take note of the close of the first hundred years in our family history ; and to mark the transit from the old to the new century by a holiday at the old homestead. And it was especially kind and thoughtful of them to recall, on the occasion, those members of the Croydon family who from necessity or choice have been drawn to other fields of labor. That they have come with alacrity and in full force, is sufficiently evinced by what we here see. Some have come with increased households ; while others whom we would gladly have welcomed, have recently passed beyond the reach of an earthly summons. Yet while we grieve for those who for the present seem to be lost to us, we may mingle our congratulations ; and unite in commemorating what the first century has wrought for us.

We are here to-day upon a stand-point where three generations are to pass in review before us. Their work is

finished, but the lesson therein taught, remains to us and to our children. And this day will not be lost if our minds are refreshed, and stimulated to higher action in the future, by what is most noble and heroic in the past. The dead century is before us. Its history can not be changed. Let us listen reverently to its teachings. The living century is already beginning to unfold. Who will say that a recital of what was suffered and achieved by the early fathers and mothers, may not animate us with a spirit which shall leave its impress on another generation? Let us to-day rekindle the fires of patriotism on the altar of our forefathers.

The wanderers have gathered at their native home to-day, because it was not in their hearts to resist the kindly summons. They are here to renew ancient friendships, to listen again to voices once familiar to them, and to look once more upon the face of nature as she greeted them in childhood. Here truly are the streams and lakes, the hills and valleys of our early days, unchanged by the lapse of time. And the grand old mountain, with its dark forests, still looks down upon us as of yore. Our country boasts of mountain peaks which attract pilgrims from distant lands, but I have seen none which can for a moment compare with the familiar one under whose shadow we now stand. There may be little to attract to it the eye of the stranger; but every true son of Croydon can testify that "the sacred mountains" are those upon which the eye was accustomed to rest in childhood.

The strong love which involuntarily attaches one to the home of his youth may not be easy of analysis; but it is a fact everywhere existing and recognized. It is but slightly dependent upon outward circumstances. The humble cot-

tage in the forest, or upon the bleak mountain side, has attractions not surpassed by the lordly mansions of wealth and luxury. The place of one's birth is not less dear because it is humble : and the memory of it is not effaced by time or worldly cares. You may immerse one in business or pleasure until his time and all his waking thoughts are wholly absorbed in the present. Nature is still true to herself. There will be moments in that life, if at no other time, in his slumbers, in the quiet hours of night, when the visions of childhood and of the early home will return. Again the brothers and sisters are with him. Again he mingles with his youthful playmates. He once more hears the voice of his sainted mother ; and he is again the gentle and confiding child, unspoiled by the follies and vices of after-life.

The query has sometimes arisen, what is it that entitles Croydon to the distinction which she has always claimed among her neighbors ? What has given her the position which is generally conceded to her ? Her territory is small, and her soil in the main unproductive. Her inhabitants are few in number ; and her mercantile and manufacturing interests are of small account. Her religious privileges have not been large, neither her schools numerous nor always of the highest order. Yet wherever you meet a Croydon boy, young or old, you meet one who is proud of his native town. I have met them in the crowded city, and far up among the sources of the great rivers of this continent ; yet in their new homes I found them the same indomitable, hard-working and well-balanced men as those who now cultivate these hills and valleys. What then is their true claim to distinction ? It is not that they are men of great

genius or extraordinary acquirements. A few have overcome the difficulties in their way, and have obtained a liberal education ; while others with less school culture, have found positions of honor and usefulness abroad. But it is not to these alone, or mainly, that the town owes her position.

All the sources of her strength may not readily be comprehended or stated. But some of them are sufficiently obvious. In the first place all accounts agree that the first settlers here were men and women of great nerve and endurance ; and many of them of unusual size and physical strength. They found here a soil and climate which called forth their best energies. They breathed a pure and invigorating air. The breezes—not always warm or mild—which swept the White or Green Mountains and came pouring over the rugged sides of our great mountain barrier, brought with them health and mental soundness.

Thus from a noble ancestry, early accustomed to struggle with Nature in her sterner moods, and to take an active part in public affairs in the stirring times in which they lived, a race of men has been trained and developed who still uphold the honor and dignity of their native town. As we have seen them in the present generation, they have appeared to be men, not perhaps in all cases over-devotional or religious, but self-reliant and ready for work ; men of integrity who could compete successfully with their neighbors or rivals in whatever business or profession they were engaged. Many of them still retain the stalwart forms of their ancestors. The original types of the Bartons, Coopers, Halls, Humphreys, Powers, Putnams, Whipples, and their compeers of a century ago, have not wholly disappeared.

And it is to be hoped that those who assemble here at the close of another century may find among them the physical and mental peculiarities of those who began their work here in 1766.

As a township Croydon has, from the beginning, been outstripped by her more prosperous neighbors. To say nothing of other flourishing towns about us, Claremont and Newport, with their water-power and broad acres of interval, have grown in wealth and population until they may look upon this little community as a humble tributary to the stream of their prosperity. But Croydon points to her sons and daughters—not supposed to be numerous until to-day—as the tower of her strength; and claims equality of rank.

We hope on this occasion to hear something of the history of the founders of this town; and of the later generations who have borne an honorable part in all our great struggles. In the war of the revolution Croydon sent her full share of men of strong arms and resolute wills, to battle for independence. The sacrifices which were made to achieve what we have so recently been called upon to defend—our national unity and independence—never seemed greater to me than when, as a boy, I listened to the recitals of my venerable grandfather, Nathaniel Wheeler, senior, of the toils and privations endured by him and his companions in arms, and their families, during the dark days of the revolution. Truly, there was no lack of patriotism on the part of the man who could, at the call of his country, march to the field of battle, while he left behind him in the wilderness his wife and infant children, dependent upon the good will of the neighbors to scare the wild beasts from the cabin door, and to

cultivate the patch of cleared ground which was to furnish the scanty supply of bread for hungry mouths. Yet we have the concurrent testimony of many, that such instances were not rare in the early history of this town.

In the second war with Great Britain Croydon sustained her part nobly ; and I count it a thing to be proud of, that when a call was made upon the town for soldiers, the proceedings commenced for a draft were at once set aside by the voluntary enlistment of its citizens ; and that the first man to offer himself as a private soldier for the service, was Nathaniel Wheeler, jr., then holding a high commission in the State militia. And in the terrible ordeal through which our beloved country has just passed, and from which she is rising, purified, we trust, as by fire, it was not inappropriate that a later descendant of the same family should surrender up his life, far from kindred and home, at the call of his country. But the history of one family is the history of many ; and I would not give an undue prominence to the services of one, while so many family records have been illuminated by the noble deeds of more than one generation. Let us, at the risk of being egotistic, tell what we know of our fathers that is worthy of record ; what we are doing or striving for ourselves, and what we hope of our children. Then will this be a day long to be remembered by the sons and daughters of Croydon.

ORATION

BY BARON STOW, D. D., OF BOSTON.*

Hugh Miller of Scotland, says, "The mind of every man has its picture-gallery—scenes of beauty, or magnificence, or quiet comfort stamped upon his memory." And he might have added, that often a very small thing, or a very trivial incident, will serve as a key to open that gallery, and let in the light of day upon long darkened reminiscences.

Seven years ago about this time, I was in the heart of Europe, in Munich, the capital of the kingdom of Bavaria. One bright, cloudless afternoon, wearied with sight-seeing, I walked into the country, partly for physical refreshment, and partly that I might turn away from the works of human art, splendid and beautiful as they were, and contemplate the richer beauties and glories of Nature. The air was balmy and charged with perfume from fields and gardens in full bloom. When far enough away, I ascended a knoll and turned to view the landscape. It was one of the loveliest. Away at my right, on the slope of a ridge,

*Owing to the rain that greatly incommoded the larger part of the audience, considerable portions of the Address, as now published, were necessarily omitted in the delivery.

was the famous national monument, the colossal statue of Bavaria, towering with its pedestal one hundred feet from the ground. Towards my left was the city, the gem of continental Europe. In front along the south loomed up the serrated range of the Tyrolese Alps, snow-clad, and glittering in the sunlight like burnished silver. The whole scene was one of blended beauty and grandeur. There was much to remind me of God, and awaken feelings of adoration.

But soon a very small object changed, suddenly and completely, the current of thought, and set it running in a new direction. Seated on the turf, I noticed at my feet a flower which I had familiarly known, in my early childhood, as "yellow weed" or "butter cup." I remembered when the fields of my native town, in the month of June, were golden with its bloom, and how the farmers classed it with the "hard-hack" and the "Canada thistle," as a nuisance not easily abated. I had learned to regard it as a pest, but there, in the outskirts of Munich, I did not dislike it ; I hailed it as an old acquaintance ; my heart sprang towards it ; I read "Croydon" on its every petal ; it was suggestive of a hundred fold more than I can now tell. In *space*, I was instantly transported nearly five thousand miles westward to my New Hampshire home, five degrees more southward than Munich, yet colder in climate and more rugged in scenery. In *time*, I was taken back nearly sixty years, and looking at things as they were when Thomas Jefferson was President of the United States, and our Government was quarreling, diplomatically, with England about Orders in Council, embargoes, and non-intercourse laws ; and when Napoleon I. at the zenith of his power, had the sympathy

of all in our country who wished to see the British Lion humbled ; and when party spirit in New Hampshire, Croydon not excepted, was at fever heat. How vivid, how minute, were my recollections all revived by the suggestiveness of that little, unpretentious flower ! I stood, once more a boy of seven years, in that semicircle of high hills, sweeping round from north-east to south-west, with slopes partly wooded and partly dotted with small rocky farms, and within which lay, not indeed a prairie, but an undulating plain, having in its center a dark forest, the haunt of night-prowling animals, the terror of the cornfield, the hen-roost and the sheepfold. Around that forest were cultivated farms, not very productive, but yielding to industry and economy support for a hardy yeomanry, not then disturbed by visions of better acres in the opening West. Had I actually been at the old homestead of Peter Stow, near the western border of that black forest, hardly could I have seen more distinctly the outline and the filling up of that semicircle, with its encompassing hills, than I then beheld them in the "picture-gallery" of the mind. What then to me were the magnificent Alps with their lofty peaks and deep gorges, and their thundering avalanches ? I had before me "Croydon Mountain," identified in the memories of childhood with my first ideas of elevation and greatness, and of isolation from all that was beyond, a barrier separating me, not from classic Italy, but from far off Cornish and Grantham.

It was midsummer in the memory, and the warm blue sky was flecked with detached clouds that dappled with shade the sunny landscape. The shadows of those clouds, moved by the lightest, softest winds, as they passed down

the mountain side and crossed the plain; and the grass and grain waving in gentle undulations; and the smoke curling aslant from the chimneys of farm-houses—all these had given me, notwithstanding Dr. Darwin's theory, my original impressions of natural beauty. Herds and flocks were grazing quietly in rocky pastures. The atmosphere was loaded with fragrance from clover blossoms, white and red, sweeter than any perfume from Araby the Blest. No sounds fell upon the ear but the music of birds, or the hum of insects, or, at the hour of twelve, the housewife's horn calling the hungry "men folks" from the field of toil to her prepared table; or, at night-fall, the hoarse cry of the night hawk and the inimitable hoot of the "boding owl," both relieved by the plaintive notes of the hidden whip-poor-will. And that house of my nativity, as innocent of paint as a Croydon maiden's face, very small, quite rustic, with few conveniences, yet the palace of an independent lord and his wife and four children—how particular were my recollections of its exact structure, gable-end to the street; of its every apartment, every article of furniture, every fireplace, door, window, stairway; of the floor and ceiling; of the cupboard and dresser; of

"The family Bible that lay on the stand:"

yes, and especially of all the inmates, the permanent and the occasional!

"Fond Memory, to her duty true,
Brings back their faded forms to view;
How lifelike, through the mist of years,
Each well-remembered face appears!"

There was on the one side the wood shed, in one part of which was the platform for spinning, quilling, warping, weaving, with all the implements of domestic manufactur-

ing. On the other, through "the stoop," was the well, with "crotch," and "sweep," and "pole," and "curb," and "old oaken bucket," and crystal water of arctic coolness. There was the garden, inclosed by a stone wall, with its fringe of currant bushes, and a thrifty nursery, and patches of vegetables, and in the center the large granite boulder smothered with roses. In the roadway was a still larger boulder, the "pulpit rock" of the future preacher. A little further down was a brook where cousins of two families met and childishly sported. In front of the house was a row of Lombardy poplars, tall and luxuriant, never cropped for fagots as I have seen them on their native plains in Northern Italy. In the rear was the apple orchard, laden with unripened, and therefore, forbidden, fruit. At a suitable distance were the barns for the storage of farm products, and for the housing of "stock." At the foot of a small declivity near by was a swamp in which frogs, at certain seasons, gave free concerts—batrachian types of certain classes of my own species whom I have everywhere met—peepers and croakers. The dwellings to be seen from that memorable stand-point were few, some of them hung on the sides of the ragged hills, far apart, and, but for domestic affections, isolated and lonely. I remembered not only the homes, but the faces and the employments and the habits and the temperaments and the reputed characters of all the neighbors within the circle of a mile radius. I remembered the low, flat-roofed school-house of the district, hidden in a small forest nook, fringed with birches and briars; and the names and faces of my teachers—God bless their precious memories—and the name and face of every fellow-pupil. I remembered nearly all the roads and farms in the town, and

most of the residences of the nine hundred inhabitants, and such family names as Metcalf, Wakefield, Stow, Ward, Fletcher, Town, Smart, Carpenter, Rawson, Straight, Powers, Goldthwait, Marsh, Frye, Darling, Thresher, Walker, Ames, Winter, Barton, Carroll, Putnam, Stockwell, Emery, Reed, Cutting, Loverin, Eggleston, Blanchard, Jacobs, Hagar, Wheeler, Crosby, Eastman, Dwinnell, Breck, Hall, Kempton, Whipple, Ferrin, Nelson, Partridge, Cooper, Paul, Newell, Rider, Melendy, Haven, Durkee, Humphrey, Clement, Sanger ; and of some of these names several families. I remembered how common it was to reduce discriminating names to convenient, familiar monosyllables, as Sam, Ben, Jock, Tim, Joe, Bije, Ned, Jake, Jim, Pete, Sol, Nat, Tom, Nate, Steve, Dave, Josh, Zeke, Lem, Rias, Bill, Reub, Mose, Frank ; but I did not recall one Sammie, or Bennie, or Eddie, or Willie, or Johnnie, or Charlie, or Freddie, or Joey, or Jamie, or Frankie or Georgie, or Hezzie. Among the girls, not then styled young ladies, were Patty, Judy, Tempe, Speedy, Peggy, Nabby, Lize, Sukey, Viney, Milly, Betsey, Fanny, Prudy, Roxy, Sally, Polly, Cindy, Listy, Jinny ; but not, as I recollect, one Hattie, or Susie, or Nannie, or Josie, or Bessie, or Lillie, or Addie, or Tillie, or Celestie, or Lulu, or Katie, or Minnie, or Rosie, or Libbie, or Maggie or Carrie. Couples were married by priest Haven, not as gentlemen and ladies, but as men and women. Father was not "pa" or "papa," but quite generally "dad" or "daddy." Mother was not "ma," but "mammy." Brother was not "bubby," or sister "sissy." The modern refinements in nomenclature and terms of endearment had not then reached so far as Croydon. Are they now here ? If they are, do you count

them improvements ? Do they convey more heart than the old styles of familiar address ?

I remembered the June training, and the one Croydon company of militia ; and the muster days, and the thirty-first regiment, and its field officers, and its "troopers," and "Springfield grenadiers," and its regimental flag, and its sham fights, brave and bloodless. I remembered the town meetings, and the spelling schools, and the squirrel hunts, and the working on the highways, and the house-warmings, and the huskings and the quiltings—not all yet as I am told, quite obsolete institutions. And I remembered the one house of Christian worship, and also the one tavern and two stores, the one carding machine and here and there a smithery, the one tannery and a few grist and saw-mills. But I remembered no lawyer or sheriff—no law officers but two justices of the peace and the tything-men, the latter the special terror of Sabbath-desecrating boys. Some of you, like myself, may recollect those keen-eyed detectives, Samuel Metcalf and Sherman Cooper.

I remembered the burial place, "God's Acre,"

"Where the rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep ;"

imperfectly inclosed, showing little of the hand of care, overgrown with mullens and briers, and far more repulsive than attractive. There were grassy mounds and significant hollows, and an occasional headstone of blue slate, but not one of marble ; and fresh in my memory were names and quaint inscriptions, closing with the monitory couplet,

"Death is a debt to Nature due,
Which I have paid, and so must you ;"

or with a fuller statement,

"As you are now, so once was I,
 As I am now, you soon must be;
 Remember, you are born to die;
 Therefore, prepare to follow me."

Say not that all this was a waking dream or a reverie, for it was neither; it was a simple look into the "picture-gallery" of the soul, and the key that unlocked the particular apartment where the Croydon of my childhood was permanently portrayed, was that little flower which had done for me what no other of all the flora of Europe could have done. The process was rapid. I sat not long on that grassy hillock, for the sun was declining, and a cold wind was setting in from the frozen Alps, and, plucking that suggestive flower, I hastened back to my lodgings. From that hour I hoped that you would, in 1866, do what you are so effectively doing to-day, and that I might be permitted to join you in commemorating the worth and the deeds of our ancestors who here made the first settlement, and commenced for the town the history you are passing in review.

Be assured, Mr. President and fellow-townsmen, I speak with intense sincerity; I count it a special privilege to be here to-day. And why should I not? Though long absent, I return with memories fresh and vivid. I am living over the first eight years of my varied, eventful life. I have seen many parts of the world, the New and the Old; but no spot on either continent, in city or country, is so dear to me as my native town. I stop not to analyze this feeling of preference; probably it defies all analysis and explanation; but I know it to be a fixed fact in my being, and only by the annihilation of that being can it be dislodged. My spirit is mellow and tender with reminiscences of the place and

the people as they were when this was my home. What I have described as lying far back in my memory, is, I presume, but a representative of what is depicted with equal clearness in the memories of others. The Wheelers, the Metcalfs, the Halls, the Powers, the Whipples, the Havens, the Carrolls, the Putnams, and all the rest of you who have lived fifty years and more, have your own picture-galleries, open to-day and filled with images of the past. You are thinking of old homesteads, and parents, and neighbors, and the events of your early days. Some of you, natives of Croydon, are older than myself, and can remember farther back ; but none of you who have been long away, I am sure, have returned with a stronger love for our native hills, or a heart warmer with gratitude that this was our birth-place, or that here we were trained to commence life in earnest. I join you fervently in these commemorative services, and cordially lay on this altar of reunion my small contribution.

Of those who, one hundred years ago, commenced here a settlement, all have long since passed away. Since I left the town, nearly two generations have come and gone. Were the first two children who were born near this spot—Catharine Whipple and Joshua Chase—now living, they would be ninety-nine years old. Very few born in the last century are present to-day. As I visit other places where I have resided, and inquire for old acquaintances, I am directed to the cemeteries. The same would be done, more or less, in Croydon ; and yet fewer in number, in proportion to the population, have closed their mission here, for more than two-thirds of those born here have emigrated, and their

graves are to be found in many States, all the way from the Penobscot to the regions beyond the Father of Waters.

I remember a few of the pioneers—more especially Moses Whipple, the veteran deacon, the man of large heart, and upright character, the genial peace-maker, respected and beloved by all ; and Ezekiel Powers, the man of large bodily proportions, whose inventive faculties and achievements of muscular strength and sterling common sense made him the hero of many a tradition. The men of the first half century were a hardy race, enterprising, adventurous, made robust by toil and exposure, with great powers of endurance, and renowned for uncommon triumphs over rugged obstacles. Nowhere else have I seen men of such physical frames and such executive energies as some whom I remember. With what rapt interest and admiration I listened, as a child, by the hour to stories of their hardships and exploits in land-clearing, river-bridging, road-making, house-building, sugar-manufacturing, bear-hunting, otter and beaver-trapping, snow-shoe-traveling ! How unproductive was often the soil they cultivated ; how unfriendly were the late spring and early autumnal frosts ; how obstructing were the terrific snow-storms ; how short and capricious were their summers, and long and rigorous their winters ; how difficult to protect their scanty crops and live stock from the depredations of wild beasts ; how coarse and often restricted were their means of sustenance ; how stringent were their privations during the Revolutionary War ; how great their sufferings from a depreciated currency, from the lack of groceries, clothing, and medical supplies ! What an unwritten history ! Traditions, once fresh and thrilling, how faded already, and soon to be

wholly forgotten ! Young as I was, I listened eagerly, and my memory was charged to repletion with narratives, original and second-hand, from my paternal grandmother, from Samuel Powers, Sherman Cooper, Aaron Whipple, and, may I not add, from that venerable spinster, “aunt Lizzie Sanger.” I was fond of the captivating detail of Jewish, Grecian, Roman and English history ; but nothing that I read struck roots so deeply in my inner being, and fixed there so permanent a lodgment, as those oral narratives heard by childhood’s ear during the long winter evenings nearly sixty years ago. Often since have I coveted the descriptive powers of those strong-minded stalwart veterans, some of whom were actors in the rough scenes they graphically portrayed. They had the elements of first-class orators. And among those narrated marvels were not a few of the heroic achievements of Croydon women, the great-grandmothers of many now before me ; of what they effectively did and bravely suffered, when their husbands, fathers, brothers, sons, were away contending for their country’s independence. I remember some of those women, of uncommon brain and muscle, giantesses and the mothers of giants ; and few of the sex have I since seen who equaled them in strength of intellect and executive accomplishment. None of them are here ; but memory holds in the “picture-gallery” their forms and features and intonations of speech.

Mr. President, by some unaccountable process, I have had the misfortune to be announced for an “oration” on this festive occasion. That is what your Committee never asked of me, and what I never promised or contemplated.

I am here no more to pronounce an oration than I am to preach a sermon. I consented, as one of the speakers, to contribute something in the way of reminiscences. Twenty years ago, I was more formal in a memorial service at Newport, when there was a reunion, not of natives merely, but of past and present residents. And, nineteen years ago, at Sherburne, Mass., I addressed, in quite another style, the descendants of Henry Leland, some of whose posterity, at an early period, settled in Croydon. But this is neither Newport nor Sherburne; it is MY BIRTHPLACE, the home of my progenitors, full to overflow of the tenderest associations, and the affections here burn with an intensity that forbids all intellectual elaboration.

To say much of persons might be deemed invidious; but of a very few I may speak particularly without incurring the imputation of partiality.

Foremost among those remembered, I mention Jacob Haven, uniformly called "Priest," as were all Congregational ministers in this region, while Baptist and Freewill Baptist ministers were as uniformly known by the title of "Elder." For more than half a century he was prominently identified with the history of the town. A native of Framingham, Mass., he was here ordained in 1788, and here he died in 1845. He was called to the pastorate by the legal voters of the town, who determined his salary; and, being the first minister settled, he was the recipient of the share of land reserved for that purpose by the grantor, Governor Wentworth. In 1805, he ceased to be the minister of the town, and became the pastor of such as adhered to him by similarity of religious views or affinity of personal feeling, and were willing to support him.

You who are not past forty do not remember the old meeting-house, a very plain structure, never finished, and too cold to be occupied in the winter. I recollect how the plates, beams and king-posts were exposed on the inside. The pews were square, with perpendicular partitions, and with turn-up seats which, at the close of the "long prayer," were let down with a famous clatter, sometimes before the "Amen." The seats were uncushioned, the aisles were uncarpeted, and many panes in the numerous windows were broken. The pulpit, behind which was the royal window, was very elevated, and contained a square block for a rest to the shorter limb of the Priest as he stood at his work. Overhanging was a clumsy "canopy" or "sounding-board." Half way up the pulpit, at the first landing, were the "Deacon's seats," graced, as I well remember, by such worthies as Moses Whipple, Stephen Powers, and Sherman Cooper. In the front gallery was the choir of singers, unsustained by organ or seraphine or even a "big fiddle," but conducted by Samuel Metcalf, who gave the key-note with his pitch-pipe, and then, in unison with the rest, sounded out the initial "fa-sol-la-mi-fa." In some of the old fugue tunes, O, how they raced in mazy confusion, all coming out nearly together! At one end of the house was a tower surmounted by a belfry, from which never a bell sent its peals among these hills. Around the house was a profusion of mayweed, milkweed, and huge thistles with fragrant blossoms and sharp thorns. In my earlier years, no vehicle with wheels ever visited that sanctuary. Some of the people went on foot, others on horseback. Now and then there was a side-saddle; but the "pillion" was the more common convenience for the women. It was nothing

unusual for the husband and wife to arrive on one horse, she behind bearing an infant in her arms, and he an older child upon a pillow on the pommel of the saddle. This various burden was conveniently dismounted at the "horse-block."

In that house, with the exception of the winter months, Priest Haven officiated from 1794 to 1826. He was a good preacher, not brilliantly rhetorical, but serious in manner, clear in statement, logical in reasoning, and forcible in appeal. A few weeks since, a gentleman from this vicinity, speaking of a lady of this town, said to me that she was "the most intelligible lady in Croydon." It was not exactly the compliment he intended; but of Priest Haven it was true that he was both intelligible and intelligent. He made himself understood. That he was impressive, I have occasion to know, for I remember well a sermon I heard him deliver more than fifty years ago, on a communion day, from the words, "*I will wash mine hands in innocency; so will I compass thine altar, O Lord.*" He never had a liberal salary. When settled, the town voted him forty pounds, to be increased, in certain contingences, to sixty pounds; "the sum to be paid in neat stock, equal to good grass-fed beef, at twenty shillings per hundred weight, or good rye at four shillings per bushel." He manifested a deep interest in the schools, and was an earnest promoter of all efforts to improve the morals of the town. He solemnized, for a long period, nearly all the marriages, and officiated at nearly all the funerals; but he never grew rich by the compensation for such services, any more than by his scanty salary. For thirty-two years he was Town Clerk, and few municipal records will more creditably bear inspection. He died beloved and lamented.

I remember only one physician—Reuben Carroll—who practiced here forty-seven years, and had largely the confidence of the people. His personal appearance, and his figure on horseback, are distinct in my memory ; yes, and those large black saddle-bags, redolent of odors not all from Cashmere or Damascus. His physiognomy was peculiar, intensely medical, and, in my simplicity, I inferred that the configuration of his facial muscles was influenced by his smelling his own drugs. He was physician, surgeon and apothecary, with a varied but not very lucrative practice. One cold winter day, as I returned from school, I was informed that I had a little brother in the house. Though less than five years old, I loved knowledge, and earnestly inquired as to the origin of the important stranger. My grandmother, who was sometimes a little waggish, for she was a Powers, bantered me with evasive answers. Not to be foiled, I pressed my inquiry, and she then told me, “ Dr. Carroll brought him.” Well, that was, for the time being, satisfactory, for it was definitive, and I had at once a solution of the mystery as to the required capacity of those odoriferous saddle-bags. How wise was I in my reasoning that Dr. Carroll kept a supply of the little folks ready-made, and dispensed them about town, wherever wanted.

Let me mention one other individual who has a large place in my recollections—the negro, Scipio Page, always on hand at town meetings and military trainings, grand caterer for the appetites of all who would pay their coppers for fruits, cakes and pastry. He was dismally black as ‘if right from Congo, and his name was freely used in family discipline. “ Old Scip will catch you,” was the climax of threats to refractory children, and planted in many a mind

a prejudice against color that was all but ineradicable. Really, "Old Scip" was one of the most harmless of men, doing what many of his despisers did not—honestly earning his own bread, and minding his own business.

I remember the schools as few, and not of a very high order. How well do I recollect one, with short terms, summer and winter, and with Vashti Hagar and Ezra Gustin as teachers—the former still living, in Illinois, and, at the age of eighty-one, a correspondent whom I value for her deep piety and vigorous good sense. The prejudice here against education, more advanced than the product of common schools, was almost universal, and a desire for more was set down to the account of indolence or misdirected ambition. The boy who ventured to look towards a College, declined at once in position among his fellows.

The only public work of those days was the Croydon Turnpike, and I remember how the share-holders, many of whom worked out their subscriptions to the stock by building each a section of the road, and who were promised large dividends, received their income mostly in the shape of assessments for repairs and the support of turnpike gates.

The politics of the town were then strongly Democratic, of the Jeffersonian type, and party-spirit acrimoniously divided the men, women and children. I had an aunt, living with one of the meekest of husbands in yonder house, who could talk on public affairs more intelligently and smartly than some of the men whom we now send to Washington.

As we had no mails, newspapers were brought weekly by post-riders from Concord and Walpole; and, though few were taken, they were read with avidity, and loaned from

hand to hand, and their contents were talked over at Edward Hall's and James Breck's stores, and Benjamin Barton's tavern, and sometimes at "intermissions" of Sabbath services.

The first settlers were chiefly from Worcester County, Mass., and were decidedly, stringently puritanical. Tradition has brought down many a fact, showing how severely conscientious they were in the observance of the Sabbath, and all this while they had no church, no minister, no gathering place for Christian worship. But most certainly the next generation, as I knew it, was more lax in morals. Religious dissensions and political bitterness had their influence in the deteriorating process ; but the copious influx and fearful consumption of New England rum did far more in the work of degeneracy. Terrible was the havoc made by that fiery agent among the bodies, minds, morals and estates of the population. Some of you remember those days of declining industry, mortgaged farms, absconding debtors, and deplorable indifference to the Sabbath and Christian proprieties. Many vices, such as horse-racing, gambling, licentiousness, were among the natural concomitants of the radical evil. But, in the third generation, there was happily a change in the habits of the people ; the temperance reform wrought beneficent transformations ; and the favorable result was seen in their persons and their manners, in their dwellings and their farms—in the general aspect of the town both physical and moral. What may now be the condition of things, I am incompetent to speak ; but I look to-day with delight upon your countenances, so different from many that I remember, inflamed, bloated, scarred with the furnace-fires of imbibed alcohol. God

less you all my relatives and friends, and mercifully preserve you from another such volcanic devastation !

But I must not trespass upon time that belongs to others. The representatives of many families are present, and their reminiscences must be as full and as interesting as my own. We are here after a long separation, that we may have one earthly reunion, and bring together the treasures of quickened memories ; and especially that we may garland the graves of the intrepid few who, on these hill-sides and along these water-courses, laid good foundations for the thrift of their successors. I have done what I could. You may do immensely better.

What now of the future ? Three generations have passed away. What shall be the character and achievements of the next three ? Who will gather here, in 1966, and rehearse the story of two centuries ? Long ere that second centennial, we shall all have joined the congregation of the departed, and our dust will repose in stillness as now reposes the dust of our revered ancestors. May we so live, and so fulfill the trusts of life, as that we may have a joyous reunion in the Better Land.

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